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MARKISON & RECKAMP, PC  
PO BOX 06229  
WACKER DR  
CHICAGO, IL 60606-0229

EXAMINER

VAUGHAN, MICHAEL R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2131

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DATE MAILED: 12/24/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

TS

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/586,907

Applicant(s)

SHAKKARWAR, RAJESH G.

Examiner

Michael R Vaughan

Art Unit

2131

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 June 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-69 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-69 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 05 June 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).  
\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.  
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_ 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

1. Claims 1-69 have been examined and are pending.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC ' 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-12, 19-21, 24, 27, 33-39, 45-47, 50, 53, 59-61, 64-69, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fisherman et al (USP 5,586,301).

As per claim 1, Fisherman et al teach a method for protection of computer assets from unauthorized access comprising the steps of:

receiving in a protection engine, an interface control command (column 3, lines 33-36);

determining whether the interface control command introduces a security risk (column 4, lines 23-30 and column 5, lines 7-11);

when the interface control command introduces a security risk, determining a state of a switch (column 4, lines 20-33);

when the state of the switch is a protected state, inhibiting execution of the interface control command (column 4, lines 38-42); and

when the state of the switch is an unprotected state, allowing execution of the interface control command (column 4, 20-24).

As per claim 33, Fisherman et al teach a method for protection of computer assets from unauthorized access comprising the steps of:

receiving in a protection engine, an interface control command (column 3, lines 33-36);

determining whether the interface control command introduces a security risk (column 4, lines 23-30 and column 5, lines 7-11);

when the interface control command introduces a security risk, determining whether of a source of the interface control command is authentic (column 14, 16-19);

when the source of the interface control command is not authentic, inhibiting execution of the interface control command (column 14, lines 19-24); and

when the source of the interface control command is authentic, allowing

execution of the interface control command (column 14, lines 25-28).

As per claims 2 and 34, Fisherman et al teach the step of inhibiting execution of the interface control command further includes the step of:

providing an indication that the execution of the interface control command was inhibited (column 6, line 65).

As per claim 3, Fisherman et al teach changing the state of the switch to the protected state when a timeout duration has elapsed (column 11, lines 50-53).

As per claim 4, Fisherman et al teach determining when the execution of the interface control command has been completed; and

when the execution of the interface control command has been completed, changing the state of the switch to the protected state (column 14, lines 30-35).

As per claim 5, Fisherman et al teach determining the state of an electrical switch (column 4, lines 29-30).

As per claim 6, Fisherman et al teach determining the state of a software-based switch (column 4, lines 29-30 and 38-42).

As per claim 7, Fisherman et al teach using cryptographic techniques to determine the state of the software-based switch (column 4, lines 25-30).

As per claims 8 and 35, Fisherman et al teach allowing data to be written to a hard disk drive (column 4, lines 23-24).

As per claims 9 and 36, Fisherman et al teach allowing data to be written to a boot sector of the hard disk drive (column 5, lines 11-15).

As per claims 10 and 37, Fisherman et al teach allowing data to be written to a file allocation table of the hard disk drive (column 5, lines 16-22).

As per claims 11 and 38, Fisherman et al teach allowing data to be written to a floppy disk drive (column 11, lines 65-67).

As per claims 12, 27, 39, and 53, Fisherman et al teach allowing data to be written to a BIOS memory (column 3, lines 55-63).

As per claims 19 and 45, Fisherman et al teach determining whether the interface control command is a hard disk drive formatting command. Fisherman et al teach that the system is able to detect write operations to the hard drive (column 5, lines 7-10). Specifically the system can detect write commands to the entire cluster (column 5, lines 30-35). Also Fisherman et al teach that proposed changes are analyzed in order to prevent unsanctioned changes in the protected files and directories. Therefore, it is inherent that Fisherman et al teach determining whether the interface control command is a hard disk drive formatting command because a format function erases all data from the hard drive partition.

As per claims 20 and 46, Fisherman et al teach determining whether the interface control command is a boot sector write command (column 6, lines 64-66).

As per claims 21 and 47, Fisherman et al teach determining whether the interface control command is a program file write command (column 5, lines 26-30).

As per claims 24 and 50, Fisherman et al teach determining whether the interface control command changes a file attribute, the file attribute enabling or disabling execution of a file corresponding to the file attribute (column 13, lines 55-65).

As per claim 59, Fisherman et al teach the step of determining whether the source of the

interface control command is authentic comprises the step of:

issuing a challenge to the source of the interface control command  
(column 14, lines 10-15);  
receiving a response from the source of the interface control command  
(column 14, lines 16-18); and  
determining whether the response is valid (column 19-22).

As per claim 60, Fisherman et al teach the step of determining whether the response is valid comprises the step of:

comparing the response to a mathematical function of a value accessible only to the protection engine and to an operating system (column 1, lines 63-66).

As per claim 61, Fisherman et al teach writing the value from a processor to a one-time-writable register in the protection engine (by an operating system) during a boot process (before application software is enabled) (column 1, lines 45-55).

As per claim 64, Fisherman et al teach an apparatus for protection of computer assets from unauthorized access comprising:

an interface controller operatively coupled to receive a interface control command to control an interface device (column 3, lines 33-36);

a switch selectable between a protected state and an unprotected state  
(column 4, lines 20-33);



a protection engine operatively coupled to the interface controller to receive the interface control command (see Fig. 1) and operatively coupled to the switch to detect whether the electrical switch is in the protected state or the unprotected state (column 4, lines 29-30) to determine whether the interface control command poses a security risk (column 4, lines 23-30 and column 5, lines 7-11) and to selectively inhibit or allow execution of the interface control command by the interface controller depending on whether or not the interface control command poses the security risk and depending on whether the switch is in the protected state or the unprotected state (column 14, lines 19-28).

As per claim 65, Fisherman et al teach a timer operatively coupled to the switch to reset the switch to the protected state after a period of time has elapsed (column 11, lines 50-53).

As per claim 66, Fisherman et al teach the switch to reset the switch to the protected state after an execution of the interface control command has been completed (column 14, lines 30-35).

As per claim 67, Fisherman et al teach an apparatus for protection of computer assets from unauthorized access comprising:

an interface controller operatively coupled to receive a interface control command to control an interface device (column 3, lines 33-36);

a protection engine operatively coupled to the interface controller for preventing unauthorized access to the interface device and operatively coupled to receive the interface control command to determine whether a source of the interface control command is authentic and to selectively allow or inhibit execution of the interface control 5 command by the interface controller depending on whether or not the source of the interface control command is authentic (column 14, lines 19-34).

As per claim 68, Fisherman et al teach a one-time-writable register operatively coupled to the protection engine to store a value used to determine whether the source of the interface control command is authentic (column 1, lines 45-55).

As per claim 69, Fisherman et al teach the value is accessible only to the protection engine and to an operating system (column 1, lines 51-54).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC ' 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 13-17, 28-32, 40-44, 54-58 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fisherman et al in view of Glossary of Information Technology Acronyms and Terms (here within GITAT).

As per claims 13-16, 28-32, 40-44, and 54-58, Fisherman et al teachings controlling write access to the hard drive (column 4, lines 20-25). Fisherman et al is silent in disclosing allowing data to be written to a parallel port, serial port, USB port, and a IEEE-1394 port. Fisherman et al does teach a computer system which controls data access to the system's basic input output system (see abstract). GITAT teaches that a parallel port, serial port, USB port, and an IEEE-1394 port are examples of

computer input output ports (pgs. 138, 248, 295, and 337). One of ordinary skill in the art would know how to control the I/O ports of a computer system. It would be advantageous to the system's security to only allow authorized entities to have access to write data to these ports. An unauthorized person might try to send sensitive data via an output port whereas an authorized person may need to use the output port in a legitimate. Clearly, the system's security would be highly stronger if the system could control access to the I/O ports.

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the teaching of GITAT within the system of Fisherman et al because it would allow the system to grant or deny data written to I/O port, thereby greatly improving the system's ability to monitor and control data.

As per claim 17, Fisherman et al teachings controlling write access to the hard drive (column 4, lines 20-25). Fisherman et al is silent in disclosing allowing data to be written to a flash memory device. GITAT teaches that a flash memory device is a nonvolatile storage chip. Hard drives are also nonvolatile. Therefore, Fisherman et al teach controlling data written to nonvolatile memory. Fisherman et al disclose a secure system whereby the security comes from monitoring and controlling access to memory.

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the teaching of GITAT within the system of Fisherman et al because it would allow the system to control data written to flash memory devices, thereby greatly improving the system's ability to monitor and control

data.

4. Claims 18, 25, 26, 51, 52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fisherman et al and GITAT as applied to claims 1 and 13 above, and further in view of Davis (USP 6,205,547).

As per claims 18, 25, 26, 51, and 52, Fisherman et al teach a system controller which intercepts commands to control the hard drive controller (see abstract). Fisherman et al fail to teach controlling commands sent to the thermal management controller. Davis teaches a thermal management controller which closely monitors and alters a computer's systems thermal conditions separately from the operating system (column 6, lines 9-16). Davis teaches that CPU fans are controlled by the thermal controller to regulate CPU temperature (column 5, lines 40-45). Fisherman's system also works independent of the operating system so it too cannot be influenced by processes of the operating system. Davis's thermal management controller provides the necessary control to keep the computer system functioning properly. Therefore, it would be highly advantageous to control which entity can write data to the thermal controller. Clearly, commands that try to turn off CPU fans, would not be allowed be allowed by unauthorized entities.

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the teaching of Davis within the system of Fisherman et al and GITAT because it would permit regulation of the thermal dynamics of the system by providing a secure method of communication with the thermal management controller.

5. Claims 22, 23, 48, 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fisherman et al in view of Chen et al (USP 5,832,208).

As per claims 22, 23, 48, 49, Fisherman et al teaches a system which analyzes commands which change the content of hard disks. Fisherman et al is silent in expressing disclosing determining whether the file extension is an executable file extension including file extensions of an exe extension, a com extension, a bat extension, or a bin extension. Chen et al discloses a system which detects and removes computer viruses (see abstract). Specifically, Chen et al discloses that computer viruses are attached to executable files with an exe extension, a com extension, a bat extension, or a bin extension so that they may infect a system (column 2, lines 8-10).

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the teaching of Chen et al within the system of Fisherman et al because it would allow the system to recognize additional types of commands that could potentially harm the computer system.

6. Claims 62 and 63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fisherman et al in view of Applied Cryptography 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (here within AC).

As per claim 62 and 63, Fisherman et al teach the step of determining whether the response is valid comprises the step of comparing the response to the correct response value. Fisherman et al are silent in expressly disclosing performing a mathematical operation on the challenge to produce a correct response value. AC teaches performing a mathematical operation on the challenge to produce a correct response value (pg. 53). AC uses pseudorandom numbers to form the challenge value. A mathematical operation is performed on each challenge so that each authentication attempt is unique and cannot be replayed.

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the teaching of AP within the system of Fisherman et al because it would allow the system to authenticate commands in which each authentication attempt is unique and highly secure.

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael R Vaughan whose telephone number is 703-305-0354. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ayaz Sheikh can be reached on 703-305-9648. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-3900.

MV  
Michael R Vaughan  
Examiner  
Art Unit 2131

  
GREGORY MORSE  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100